



News Release

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Media Contact:
Stephen McDonald
Utah Department of Health
801-538-7099

West Nile Virus Found in More Utah Counties

Human Cases Continue to Rise

(Salt Lake City, UT) – West Nile virus (WNV) has spread to more areas throughout Utah and is showing up in greater numbers this year than last year before Labor Day weekend. Public health officials statewide continue to urge Utahns to Fight the Bite by protecting themselves from mosquito bites while outdoors from dusk to dawn.

Labor Day weekend presents a time when friends and family gather and may spend time outdoors. Whether you stay home for a backyard picnic or travel to outdoor fun spots, Utah public health officials remind Utahns that Labor Day is not the end of the WNV risk season. Your opportunities to be outdoors continue, and may actually increase as the temperatures cool. With the days getting shorter more of the time outdoors will occur between dusk and dawn.

“We know the virus is circulating in birds and mosquitoes in more parts of the state this year so the risk to humans and horses is greater than ever before,” said Dr. Robert Rolfs, State Epidemiologist, UDOH. “Utahns need to be vigilant about protecting themselves and their families from WNV by using insect repellents containing DEET and covering up.”

So far this year in Utah, WNV has been found in 12 counties, involving 10 humans, 23 horses, 52 mosquito pools, 8 birds and 44 sentinel chickens. At this same time last year the virus was found in 9 counties, 6 humans, 3 horses, 52 mosquito pools, 7 sentinel chickens and 3 birds.

Of the 10 human cases detected so far in 2005, six are in the TriCounty Health District (Duchesne and Uintah counties) and four in Utah County. Four of the 10 cases experienced severe neuro-invasive disease symptoms.

The newest counties to detect WNV are Juab (mosquitoes), Carbon and Emery (birds). The virus has been previously detected in Duchesne, Uintah, Utah, Weber, Davis, Tooele, Salt Lake, Grand and Washington counties.

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Preventing mosquito bites is the best way to avoid getting WNV. Utahns can protect themselves from mosquito bites by:

- Using mosquito repellents that contain DEET or Picaridin (especially from dusk to dawn).
- Wearing long-sleeve shirts and long pants while outdoors.
- Getting rid of standing water; this is where mosquitoes may live.

For more information, call your local health department or the UDOH's Health Resource Line at 1-888-222-2542. For up-to-date information on the spread of West Nile virus in Utah, please visit www.health.utah.gov/wnv.

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